

Britain Jails Two Journalists

2/22/77
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Washington Post Foreign Service

LONDON, Feb. 21—The government today jailed two British journalists for allegedly receiving secret information.

The move appears to violate a pledge Home Secretary Merlyn Rees gave the House of Commons in November. He said then that the government believes that the "mere receipt" of information should not lead to the prosecution of anyone under Britain's 1911 Official Secrets Act.

One of the British writers jailed without bail today is Duncan Campbell, 24, an electronics specialist. He has worked closely with Mark Hosenball, one of two Americans who lost their appeals against deportation last week. Campbell had testified on Hosenball's behalf and ridiculed the British intelligence services.

Campbell and two men arrested with him supported the campaign against the deportation of Hosenball,

25, a London reporter, and Philip Agee, 41, a former CIA agent who wrote a book about the agency. Agee and Hosenball have been ordered out of Britain as security risks.

Campbell was arrested Friday night with Crispin Aubrey, 31, a reporter for Time Out, a leftist weekly and entertainment guide.

The pair were picked up as they left the North London apartment of John Berry, 33, a former signal corps specialist. Berry was also arrested. He was accused of transmitting secrets and the others of receiving them.

Under the act, a journalist can be jailed for as long as two years for receiving unauthorized information. Because of its enormous sweep, the law has fallen into disrepute and the government has promised to reform it.

The three men were arrested by detectives from Special Branch, the political police for Scotland Yard who carry out surveillance and arrest missions for MI5. This is the agency that

is supposed to guard Britain against internal subversion, and it was the target for Campbell's ridicule.

No details of the offending "secrets" have been disclosed, but it is thought here that Berry offered Campbell information about the Government Communications Headquarters in Cheltenham. This is the British National Security Agency that listens in on radio traffic around the world, cracks codes and the like.

Berry, who is now described as a truck driver and was a social worker, is said by his friends to have listened in on diplomatic exchanges when he served in the Royal Signals from 1966 to 1970.

Last May Campbell and Hosenball co-authored a long account of the Cheltenham electronic spy network. Campbell testified, however, that he had written "90 per cent" of the article and that all the material came from telephone books, newspaper clippings and other public sources.